

Aftermath

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The East Texas State University Mathematics Department Newsletter

Fall 1991

FIFTH ANNUAL HOMECOMING ALUMNI BREAKFAST SCHEDULED

The 1991 Homecoming Alumni Breakfast will be held at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, November 2, in the Bluebonnet-Pecan-Friendship rooms in the Sam Rayburn Memorial Student Center. This event has become an important activity for the department, benefiting students and alumni alike. Scholarships will be awarded and alumni recognized. If you would like to attend, please fill out the form found elsewhere in this newsletter and mail it to the ETSU Mathematics Department by October 25, 1991. We hope to see you there.

In addition to the Breakfast, many other activities are scheduled. The 1990 Lone Star Champion ETSU Lions will be hosting Abilene Christian University at 2:30 p.m.

MATH CLUB NEWS

by John Heath

Our fund raising project for this past year involved collecting paper for recycling. We found it to be a great deal of work, but believe it was a worthwhile endeavor. Since the University has started a recycling drive of its own, we have decided to discontinue this project and come up with something new. Many people worked hard on this operation, including Patricia Young, Rebecca Sutton, Jean Jones and our Mathematics Departmental Secretary, Karen Starks. Special plaudits go to David Brown of Dallas, who did much of the organizing, gathering, and hauling to Plano for recycling. He now serves on the University Recycling Committee.

Mr. Mike Smith of the Balloon Division of Winzen International, Sulphur Springs, was our speaker at the annual banquet on April 12, 1991. He gave an informative program about their work and made us aware of the scientific importance of the research that has taken place in conjunction with balloon experiments, especially that which complements the space program. We had a fine turnout and were especially happy that W. W. "Bub" Taylor and Virginia could come.

We are looking forward to a great year. Those serving as officers of the clubs during the 1991-92 school year will be Sherrie Ellis, Dallas; Jean Jones, DeKalb; Laura Lepro, Euless; Rebecca Sutton, Grand Saline; Connie Yarema, Commerce.

NEW SCHOLARSHIPS ENDOWED

Two new scholarships have been endowed within the past year. The Rachel Lafferty Mathematics Scholarship has been established by Dr. and Mrs. H. M. Lafferty. The first recipient of the scholarship was Tara Robertson, a Junior mathematics major from Mount Pleasant. Rachel Lafferty received a BS degree in mathematics from ETSU and is a charter member of the ETSU Foundation Board Founders Circle.

The John and Elaine Yznaga Mathematics Scholarship will be awarded for the first time during the 1991 Homecoming activities. The scholarship was created by John and Elaine Yznaga who reside in Greenville. John is a 1982 computer science graduate of ETSU who now works as an Engineering Specialist at E-Systems, Greenville. Elaine, formerly with E-Systems, Greenville, received a BS degree in mathematics and computer science from ETSU in 1982.

ALUMNI FOCUS

The Mathematics Department produces a significant number of public school teachers each year. As these teachers move into the job market, they find challenging and difficult situations. The harsh realities of the classroom and the sense of urgency over poor performance of Americans in mathematics make teaching the subject a demanding profession. Still, the satisfaction and special sense of accomplishment available only in teaching make it a rewarding occupation. We are proud of the mathematics teachers trained at East Texas. Many of them possess achievements which make them worthy of recognition. In an effort to draw attention to all of our alumni who are public school teachers, we feature one in this column.

Jennifer Garrett received a BA degree from the University of Missouri before coming to ETSU in 1975. She received her MS degree in 1977. She has taught as a graduate assistant at ETSU and in 4th and 5th grades at Miller Grove. For the past nine years, she has taught mathematics and Algebra I at Commerce Middle School. Positive thinking, fun learning activities, and lots of dedicated service are what make Jennifer Garrett an award-winning teacher.

Garrett was officially named Outstanding Mathematics Teacher of Hunt County by E-Systems Greenville Division last May. E-Systems solicited nominations from Hunt County schools, and an East Texas State University panel made the final selections. The award was presented at a Greenville ISD Math and Science banquet, also sponsored by E-Systems. "I think there are so many good mathematics teachers in our district; I just happen to be the lucky one they picked," Garrett said. Garrett expressed an overwhelming love and enthusiasm for mathematics that she wants to instill in her students. "My primary goal is to get every student that walks through that door to love mathematics," Garrett said. "I believe in a comfortable, enjoyable classroom with lots of encouragement and hard work!"

Some effective methods that Garrett uses in her teaching include interactive group activities, mental problem-solving and games that are

challenging, but still enjoyable. She believes that "mathematics is definitely a concrete way to practice logic."

Since joining CISD as a mathematics teacher in 1982, Garrett has also coached the UIL Number Sense team for sixth, seventh and eighth grades. In the 1991 competition, members of the sixth grade team took first, third and fifth place, while the seventh and eighth grade team members took first place. A new nationwide program in which Garrett has sponsored a CMS team the last two years is "Math Counts." Placing 15th in the first year, the team took second place in the 1991 North East Texas contest.

In 1990, Garrett was named to Who's Who Among America's Teachers and this year was recognized by the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science. The academy sponsors a program for outstanding students in mathematics and science. Students that are admitted to the program are allowed to choose one teacher that they feel helped contribute greatly to their education. Former CMS student Jeremy Quatacker chose Garrett for the award.

"Jennifer brings a fresh up-beat 'let's learn' approach to her teaching," Ricky Beadles, CMS principal said. "She challenges her students and sets the same high expectations for them that she sets for herself."

Although Garrett teaches full time and sponsors student activities, she also holds office in two professional organizations. After two years as president she has been named vice president of PEO, a philanthropic and educational organization. She is also the 1991-1992 vice president of membership for Phi Delta Kappa.

When her students asked Garrett about the award, she told them she won because she had the best students in Hunt County. "You're the best math teacher I've had, because you explain everything and you don't get restless," a sixth grader wrote in a card to Garrett. "I simply enjoy what I do and I think that's the key," Garrett said.

DEPARTMENT HEAD'S COLUMN

by *Stuart Anderson*

My thanks to the alumni who responded to the questionnaire contained in our last newsletter. The information you provided and your generous comments were helpful and gratifying.

Even though we are plagued with setbacks and uncertainties in state funding, our alumni continue to be a source of support and satisfaction. Through your assistance, we now have four endowed scholarship funds. They are in the names of Cecil B. Wright, Bub Taylor, Rachel Lafferty, and John and Elaine Yznaga. While these would be bright and welcome signs at any time, they are especially appreciated now.

The lack of adequate state funding is not suppressing the desire of the department to do quality work. Dr. Lambert's efforts in computer calculus are proceeding. He is in the final stages of writing a manual for the course. Dr. Lamb is preparing to teach a new University Studies capstone course called Space: The Final Frontier. It will be offered for the first time in Spring, 1992

There is also activity in an exciting new area of mathematics called dynamical systems. The subject has applications and connections in areas as diverse as medicine, wildlife population, and art. While it is a topic of research interest to mathematicians, elements of it can be presented very successfully to high school students. Breakthroughs in computers have made the study of dynamical systems accessible. It is very possible that many of you will soon become familiar with terms such as fractal, chaos, and bifurcations - all common in dynamical systems.

During the Spring, 1991 semester, we ran a dynamical systems seminar for the faculty. In the Spring, 1992 semester, we plan to teach the course to advanced undergraduates and graduate students. By making these efforts, we hope to keep our department active and current and to prepare our students in the fullest possible way.

ALUMNI NOTES

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ALUMNI BREAKFAST RESERVATION FORM AND/OR ALUMNI NEWS UPDATE

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State & Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Please reserve _____ places at the Homecoming Alumni Breakfast at \$6.00 each.
Total Enclosed: \$ _____
My news for the Alumni News Column is :

MATHEMATICS FACULTY ACTIVITIES

Several faculty members presented papers at the annual meeting of the Texas Section of the Mathematical Association of America held April 4-6, 1991, at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches. They were as follows:

Howard Lambert, "Business Calculus with Derive."

John Lamb, Jr., "Searching for Narcissistic Loops by Computer."

Stuart Anderson, "Chaos and the $3x + 1$ Problem."

John Lamb, Jr. has had two articles published over the past year: "Can a Crescent Mars Ever Be Seen From Earth?" in the December, 1990 issue of School Science and Mathematics, and "Trisecting an Angle - Almost, Part 2," in the January, 1991 issue of The Mathematics Teacher.

Bill Aslan and **John Lamb, Jr.** along with **Ramona Chance** and **Jerry D. Lowe** published "Inscribing an 'Approximate' Nonagon in a Circle," in the May, 1991 issue of The Mathematics Teacher.

Stuart Anderson and **Dale Bedgood** had an article published in the Spring, 1991 issue of Mathematics and Computer Education: "Offering a History of Mathematics Course."

Dale Bedgood served for the past year as President of the Texas Section of the Mathematical Association of America.

Vance Underhill attended a history of mathematics conference honoring noted mathematics historian **Howard Eves** in Orlando, Florida on May 9-11, 1991.

John Lamb, Jr. presented a talk, "A Computer Search for Regular and Semi-Regular Tessellations of the Plane," at the Conference for the Advancement of Mathematics Teaching on August 8, 1991 in Houston.

Stuart Anderson presented the following talks: "Undergraduate History of Mathematics: Using Team Teaching," at the joint meetings of the AMS and MAA on January 19, 1991 in San Francisco; "The $3x+1$ Problem," at the Dynamical Systems Institute on July 9, 1991 in Boston.

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